

What is Begging?

- Begging in the contemporary society is a symptom of various social problems.
- Begging is demeaning and against human dignity.
- Begging in India is a criminal offence.
- Beggary is closely linked with Homelessness and destitution.
- Beggary is univesally considered Negative attitute.

Factors Responsible for Begging

- Economic, Social, Biological, Religious and other reasons responsible for Begging.
- Poverty, Unemployment, Broken Homes.
- Migration, Family disorganised, unguided childhood, caste, customs.
- Drug addiction, Alcoholism, Mental illness, disability, destitution etc, are responsible for begging.

Historical Background of Begging in India

- Beggary in India since vedic era(c1500bc)
- Many religions as like Hinduism, Jainism and Islam consider beggary as integral part.
- Society always looked after these poor.
- Britishers brought beggary from religious problem to social and economic problem's domain.
- In independent India it has become a problem of ill execution less preventive.

Relation between Begging and Religion

- Bhiksha (contribution/begging) is very acceptable act in society since centuries in India .
- Hindu, Buddhist, Jain monks received bhiksha in respectably and considered a noble work.
- For those who are on the verge of destitution has been supported by community fund always.
- Islam collected zakat and Christians served

Begging at New Delhi

- At New Delhi Begging defined by BPBA 1960 making Innocent People beggars.
- Delhi has 12 beggar homes and a beggar court but during some international activities constitute mobile courts also.
- In Act there are provision of trainings and capacity building programes for convicted person but execution is very bad.
- Beggar home is costodian just like prison.

Beggars Population in India

- In the census of last seventy years the numbers of Beggars have never found more than 700,000 in each census.
- Census 1951-500,000; Census 2001-700,000 and Census 2011-4,13,670.
- In 2011, total male beggars were 2,20,000 and Female beggars were 1.91,000.
- Poor states like West Bengal, U.P, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Assam
- 21% beggars are literate Delhi has 2187 .

Areas of Begging at New Delhi

- Shopping area and markets.
- Places of Worship especially where food is served.
- Bus Stop, Railway station, Red Lights.
- Historical sites and heritage sites.
- Eating points .
- Timing of Begging, Beats of Begging .
- Part time begging(casualworkers/homeles)

Begging a Condition of maximum exploitation

- Children who have involved in Begging because of drugs and food.
- Women are exploited for drugs by gangs
- Pattern of exploitation is very organised.
- Women are sexually and physically expl.
- Disables and tribal people are also exploited by drug sellers.
- In Indian Penal code all such activities crime but gangs hardly get caught.

Bombay Prevention of Begging Act-1959

- Act defining ‘ soliciting or receiving alms in a public place or pretence such as singing, dancing,fortune telling, performing or offering any articles for sale is illegal for doing such thing anybody can be put into jail.
- The most unacceptable provision of this act is to legitimate any homeless or poor people activity for rounded.

Court's View and Freedom of Expression

- India as a welfare state under constitution.
- Justice Krishna Iyer judgement on freedom of expression.
- Delhi High Court judgement on Ramlakhan vs State , 2005.
- A condition of hunger and destitution can not be basis for converting in criminal offence.

Some Solutions

- New Preventive programmes and policy.
- Model legislation on Beggary Act.
- For destitute , Beggars and leprosy affected persons need better rehabilitation policy.
- Identity documents and proper enumeration of people involve in begging.
- Awareness Campaign within society.
- Considering Right to life and liberty of individual

Activities on Ground for Homeless and Beggars

- Free legal Aid at Beggars Courts.
- Advocacy for New Law.
- Out Reach Clinic for Homeless and destitute.
- Skill building trainings programmes.
- Identity documents as like voter id cards , Bank accounts, adhar cards etc.
- Civil Society initiatives for Homeless people.

Conclusions

- Begging is not only relationship of giving and receiving.
- Begging is a basic human activity that is similar across many cultures.
- Begging is a performance based acts also.
- Begging should not be considered as a criminal offence.
- Defining begging need to consider role and responsibility of state.

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